This record is a partial extract of the original cable. The full text of the original cable is not available.

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UNCLAS ANKARA 004870

SIPDIS

LABOR PLEASE PASS TO ARNOLD LEVINE

E.O. 12958: N/A
TAGS: EIND ELAB ETRD PHUM SOCI TU
SUBJECT: 2004 CHILD LABOR UPDATE

REF: A. STATE 163982

    ¶B. 03 ANKARA 5326

¶1. (U) In response to reftel A, Embassy Ankara submits this report to update its August 2003 report on child labor in Turkey.

¶2. (U) In pursuing its EU candidacy Turkey continues to work to eliminate the worst forms of child labor (WFCL). The information in this telegram builds upon material provided in reftel B. In June 2003, for example, the Turkish government addressed this problem by enacting a more stringent labor code, including provisions related to child labor. As planned, in 2004, the Ministry of Labor and Social Services (MOL) compiled a list of prohibited occupations for children (defined as persons who are up to fourteen, but not yet fifteen years old) and youngsters (those between fifteen and eighteen years old, but not yet nineteen years old); in May 2004, the MOL published a list of permitted occupations for children and youth. Asserting that the GOT's efforts have virtually eliminated instances of children between the ages of 12 and 14 years old engaged in the WFCL, the GOT's State Statistics Office (SSO) plans to eliminate employment data about this age group.

¶3. (U) SSO sampling conducted in 2004 indicates there are 14,455,000 children between the ages of 7 and 17 years in Turkey; 12,224,000 or 84.6 percent are currently attending school. At the same time, there are 7,405,000 children (10.6 percent of the population) between the ages of 12 and 17 years in Turkey; 6,494,000 children or 87.7 percent are not working, while 911,000, or 12.3 percent are employed. Among working children, 52.5 percent were thought mostly to be working in agriculture on family farms during summer vacations. 23.7 percent worked in industrial jobs. In 2003, 769,000 children, or 14.4 percent of this age group, were employed.

¶4. (U) The GOT has increased the level of resource allocation to the Child Labor Unit (CLU) of the MOL, most notably in the allocation of larger office space and additional staff. The CLU office currently consists of three people and there are plans to have twenty-five people working on this issue by the end of 2004. The CLU is headed by a labor inspector who personally conducts on-site visits.

¶5. (U) While current legislation mandates fines and jail sentences for violations of child labor regulations, the CLU staff is using family support programs to provide vocational training, jobs and income assistance to parents, and at the same time educating the child and assisting with expenses for clothing, school supplies and transportation. The CLU says that since 1992 it has helped 25,000 families involving 50,000 children. The Prime Ministry's Social Assistance and Solidarity Fund for Social Risk has 1800 branches throughout the country which are taking part in a World Bank-funded initiative to assist families in the campaign against the WFCL. The CLU conducts information sessions for parents about the real costs of child labor. The CLU distributed Turkish and English language pamphlets and booklets about its work to end WFCL in information sessions. The Ministry of Education supports an Apprenticeship Training Center program combining work and classroom attendance intended primarily for youngsters who have completed primary school and are at least fifteen years old.

¶6. (U) In 2005, the MOL plans to embark on a two-phase, four-year 18 million euro joint project with the EU and the International Labor Organization to extricate children from the WFCL and send them to school. At the same time, this project will pay all school expenses for students and provide vocational training for parents. The GOT hopes to eradicate WFCL within four years under this program.

¶7. (U) The CLU looks forward to the announcement of the U.S. Department of Labor's Time-Bound grant to help it combat the WFCL.
EDELMAN